

1485. aa. 6.

THE
DEIFICATION
OF THE
FAIR-SEX.

[Price ONE SHILLING.]

THE
DEFICITION



FAIR-2-E-X

1956 ONE SHILLING

THE
DEIFICATION

OF THE
FAIR-SEX.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. WILLIAMS, the Corner of the
Mitre-Tavern, Fleet-street.

MDCCLXII.

THE

DEFINITION

OF THE

EXPLANATION



JOHN D. O'NEILL
Printed for J. Williams, the Cambridge
Printer, London, England.

MDCCLXII

T H E

P R E F A C E.

THIS dissertation, which is offered to the public, was found amongst the writings of a very learned gentleman: many other works of his, which he intended for the press, unfortunately were destroyed five or six years ago. I have been informed by several gentlemen of undoubted veracity, who were particularly acquainted with the author, that they have seen above sixty different dissertations which he intended to publish.

B

Some

Some fragments of his works have lately come to our hands, and particularly a dissertation upon the motives and consequences of the Queen of Sheba's voyage. It is imagined by some, that the Queen, charmed with the reputation of King Solomon, who, with very good reason, was esteemed the most magnificent and polite Prince the world at that time had, was inflamed with a desire, out of a principle of vanity, too common amongst women, of making a conquest of the King's heart; and being sensible that her outward charms, joined with her mental qualifications, were capable of inspiring the King with the most ardent love, thought of being preferred to all the ladies of the court. Solomon, as our author says, answered the most ardent expectations of the Queen; he distinguished her in every

every respect above all others, and assured her, that her rank was but the object of his respect, but her beauty and wit were the summit of all his care, and the centre of his affections.

When Solomon talked of love, he was listened to ; if of pleasures and favours, the Queen willingly granted him his desires ; but the too great delicacy and voluptuousness of the King, made him lose all the pleasures he had promised himself. The Queen, according to what our author pretends to know, and can prove, had a f—ft—la, with which she had been afflicted a long time : the gallant was too soon sensible of it, and an excess of delicacy lost him the pleasure he so ardently wished for. This is an anecdote that most of the Literati never before heard of ; and for the proof of

which, he quotes several Hebrew and Ethiopian manuscripts.

I don't doubt but some people will condemn the author of the following dissertation, and blame him for not making better use of his wit and fine parts ; but the reflection is not so weighty as at first sight it seems to be ; for if by making a good use of his qualifications, is meant the composing of works that are absolutely and intrinsically useful, those of morality would be the only ones that deserve the name.

Pyhsic is reduced in a manner to nothing but Hypothesis, and to content itself with probabilities. All other sciences are at this time subordinate to the imagination ; this is an
age

age of systems; we agree about nothing, and the more we write, the more the world is at variance.

No books are strictly useful, but those that teach us to live well, to which we may add those that treat of anatomy, physic, botany, &c. whose ultimate end is to procure real advantages to the world: but Pedantry has taken care not to suffer this notion to take root in the mind of man. Every work that pleases the fancy, and tickles the imagination, is now esteemed really necessary, and every one believes the science he is attached to, is the only useful one to mankind. A divine thinks he does a particular service to his neighbour in telling him, that after many tedious enquiries, he has discovered that Toby, the son of Tobit,

was not a mountebank, nor a quack; and that the design of the angel, in learning him the use of the liver and gall of a certain fish, was not to make him a forcerer, or to instruct him how to make philtres and talismans.

A critic thinks he has employed his time well, in examining how those soldiers, who were inclosed in the Trojan horse, could satisfy the demands of nature, without fouling themselves, or infecting their comrades. Yet all these fine productions have their partizans. There are as many tastes as faces; for that which instructs one, seems quite useless to another; and that which will divert a man of taste, would offend a bigot.

That

That man is the best judge, who reads books without prejudice. A strict regard ought to be paid to the manner in which an author treats a subject; if a painter has drawn a naked Venus, is it my business to ask him why he did not paint a Nun? I have nothing to do with the painter's choice; and I am positive that he who excels in drawing a naked figure, can never give a perfect representation of a veiled and modest one.

We may, without doing injury to the author's memory, affirm, that he loved the fair; but it appears by his works, that this peculiar taste gained him credit; for having purified his mind of all it's grossest particles, he loved with delicacy, and was merry with *Wit and Dis-*

cernment. When a man makes a proper use of his tender regard for the fair-sex, his intercourse with the ladies, is to him a fruitful source, from whence all civil virtues, and whatever is agreeable to society, have their rise. Politeness softens the disposition, and gives that delicacy and ease, which spreads so many graces in conversation and writing; without which, Ovid, Lucretius, or Virgil, had never pleased. This is not a proper place to prove my assertion, but it is incontestible that Corinna has made Ovid say more pretty things than Cæsar and Pompey ever made Lucan do.

It is not expected that this dissertation will shine in the world; for the learned will not give themselves the trouble to read it, because it is not in their sphere, unless their zeal for the

P R E F A C E.

xvii

the ancients, upon whose actions they love to criticize, oblige them: however, if it meets with a favourable reception from the public, they shall have whatever pieces I can collect of the author's. It is the interest of the fair-sex to defend it; for here their rights and privileges are maintained; and the men may observe the manner they ought to deal with that fairer part of mankind.

T H E

the ancients, upon whose actions they love
to criticize, obligation; however, if it meets
with a favourable reception from the public,
they shall have whatever prices I can collect
of the author's. It is the interest of the fair-
sex to defend it; for here their rights and pri-
vileges are maintained; and the man may ob-
serve the manner they ought to hold with that
fairer part of mankind.

T H E

T H E

D E I F I C A T I O N

O F T H E

F A I R S E X.

THE Greeks and Romans, of all nations in the world, were the most superstitious; every thing became the object of their adoration. These people, seldom having recourse to the order of things, judged only by their effects; the circumstances strengthened their piety, and the

20 THE DEIFICATION OF

the good or ill success of the effects, constituted a divinity, or took away one from them.

Wood, stone, metals, the stars; in a word, every object in the universe, stood a chance of being deified, and of having altars raised to their honour.

The passions had the same advantage: love, fortune, valour, strength, friendship, and hatred, have been deified without distinction. If Vesta had her temple, Venus had her altars; and if their great men had their statues, the famous courtesans had theirs too. The ignorance

~~order of things, judged only by their effects~~
Professions change like fashions; a courtesan is now contemptible; but it was not always so; for in former ages they were

rance men were in, or the want they had of certain things, or the evils those things produced, was the rule that determined them in the choice of their Gods.

Every individual made his own domestic Gods, and discharged them when he was ill-served. No wonder then we cannot come to a true knowledge of the religious worship of those people, seeing that every one had the privilege of adapting his own system of religion.

were in great esteem; those I mean who, by their wit and beauty, had amassed considerable fortunes; and I affirm that they sometime contribute more to the public good, than the most solitary devotee. Those of Athens and Rome did often put their riches to very commendable uses: it is true, indeed, that the misses of Kings and Lords are in as good repute as ever Lais and Phryme were; but the public is so little obliged to them, that they will never consent to erect trophies to their honour.

Super-

22 THE DEIFICATION OF

Superstition had the same effect upon those people, as prejudice has daily amongst us; for we can give no more satisfactory accounts of our faith than the pagans of their idolatrous systems. A father, when dying, recommended to his son the gods he had made choice of, and if the son was content with them, he offered sacrifices to them. This ought not, in my opinion, to be thought extraordinary; nature presents us with one of the most striking appearances; but at the same time that she makes such magnificent and profuse display of her presents, she lays before our view the principal uses we ought to make of the good things she bestows. We have but an imperfect idea of a great part of those objects that surround us; we are also ignorant of the manner in which they are made; and we know as little of their qualities, their
con-

connections, causes and effects; besides, with philosophy, void of experience, and clothed in probabilities, we need not be surprised that those people, buried in uncertainties, should bend the knee before the elements and objects they have produced.

How could they act otherwise? May we not then aver, that the systems of religion they adopted, were the only rational ones. The greatest men amongst the pagans have done much worse; for at the same time they made their Gods the source of all good, yet they were, in truth, the origin of all disorders and confusion. The opinion concerning two principles introduced by Terebinthus and Maries was their favourite, and all the world knows the sad consequences that ensued.

It

24 THE DEIFICATION OF

It was therefore natural that these people, destitute of ideas, *à Priori*, should conduct themselves by rules and reasons *à posteriori*, i. e. having no idea of a supreme being, and being deficient in physical knowledge, they attributed some virtue, some property, or some direction to nature and the objects she produced.

These people having no just notion of things, and not considering objects in their proper lights, at last annexed an idea of reality and power to things only intended to instruct them; for every one knows that the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians have been a fruitful source of idolatry; the whoop, the hawk, the Gods Isis and Osiris, all symbols design'd to explain something, and to convey instruction, became divinities by succession

cession of time *. It is well known that the god Anubis was nothing but the conicule, or dog-star, to which they gave the name of Dog or Barker; because the appearing of that star inform'd them, (as they found by observations) of the time the Nile overflow'd it's banks, which obliged both men and beasts to retire to higher grounds, till the river return'd to it's proper channel.

Thus, by annexing ideas of power to the Sun and Moon, they have dropt general ideas for more particular ones, which will not surprize us, if we consider that we have seen, in a more enlightened age, men attribute virtue, and occult qualities, to things which reason and experience

C

contradict.

* The Author of the history of the heavens has proved this with solidity and judgment.

contradict. For the proof of my assertion read the chymists.

We ought not to be surprised that the poor pagans worshipped an ear of corn, when we think of the consequences of superstition amongst us, and in an age the most enlightned with philosophy, and disengaged of prejudices. I believe it will be needless to say more. All judicious men justify the pagans, and require no more of them than what they were capable of giving, and we may, with good reason, believe that they would have been our equals in virtue if they had equalled us in knowledge. This short preamble I thought necessary, but if it should be looked upon as superfluous, I ask the reader's pardon.

— Though I have endeavoured to exculpate the Greeks and Romans as to their idolatry, yet

yet I could, with as much reason, blame them for having so little order and choice. Many things have been the objects of their homage and veneration, which they ought only to have admired; and several others, worthy of honour and respect, have been entirely neglected. I will endeavour to assign a reason for this inconsistency, and at the same time prove that nothing merits homage and respect, so much as the natural parts of a woman, which the vulgar, with very little reason, and less politeness, call the shameful parts.

The Greeks received from the Egyptians, the greatest part of their religious ceremonies, and adopted some of their deities: the Romans received from the Greeks, what they took from the Egyptians. It appears that the Sun and

Moon have been the favourite deities, not only of those nations of which I am speaking, but also of almost all others that have had no fixed system of religion : the reason of their worshipping the Stars, was undoubtedly founded upon a visible utility that men derive from their influence, and other qualities, that their respect, credulity, or gratitude, attributed to them. It was very natural to look upon the Sun as the source and dispenser of light, heat, vegetation, and change of seasons. From these simple ideas, they easily proceeded to ideas more complex and extensive. From the most noble ideas, we may easily run into those of an inferior order, and by absenting one's self by little and little, from the most natural and true ideas, may arrive at the meanest and most false. Every individual being at liberty to
 choose

chuse his own Gods, and to pay them what homage he pleased; it was natural that the deity he made choice of, should correspond with the ideas he had of it. We do not all love and respect the same things, neither do we equally hate and despise the same objects.

Religion amongst the Greeks and Romans, depended entirely upon taste; it is likewise certain that the ignorant and the philosopher, the sensualist and the stupid, did not carry their offerings to the same altar, and their worship for the same reason was as noble and delicate with the one, as it was mean and clownish with the other.

Slacken the curb of the imagination, and it runs great lengths. The beauty or deformity

30 THE DEIFICATION OF

formity of the productions of the mind, depend upon its richness or indigence; but without judgment, and reason to conduct it, the most lively and brilliant one degenerates into folly. The ancients, who have excelled in works of the mind, and who, without contradiction, have been the models upon which the finest geniusses of our times have been formed, have not been the least ingenious in forming systems of religion. There were deities for all orders of men; those of great lords had nothing to do with those of the other nobility and gentry, &c.

I am not at all surprized to find that these people ran into such idolatrous notions; but I cannot easily comprehend the want of order and conduct, which is so visible in their choice;

ytiamot

8 0

if

if they had consulted reason, and made use of common sense, they might have made choice of objects generally esteemed, and such as demand our love and gratitude.

What is there in nature so beautiful as woman! And what can be more natural, than to have in veneration the organ of the production of reasonable beings? If the fair-sex, who have but seldom the management of affairs, and the inspection of rites and ceremonies, which pertain to religion, had been legislators, they would have made choice of a deity that could have procured them sensual happiness. Woman ought to be respected and adored, since she is capable of giving the most refined pleasure.

Nature and reason will make us acknowledge that these parts, with all the charms of pleasure, have likewise the boasted advantage of being the repositories and organs of propagation, and of the increase of mankind.

What does the sun, or what is he in comparison? He gives light, and communicates heat. What does the earth? She opens her bosom to the industrious labourer, and with profusion and magnificence gives him what was deposited in her bowels; reason enough, in a Pagan's manner of thinking, for having divine honours attributed to her.

But these parts are the source of all felicity; they keep up union and harmony in society, and tame the most savage mortals. The soldier on his return from battle, covered with blood
and

and dust, his soul filled with slaughter and horror, at the sight of these, forgets the field of Mars. The sailor, in their presence forgets his shipwreck, and forbears his blasphemies. The sage politician, the intrepid warrior, the grave magistrate, the pedant, and the courtier, find a recompence here for all their troubles. The world is indebted to them for kings and heroes, for inventors of arts and sciences, and, in a word, for every thing that contributes most to the beauty and magnificence of the world; therefore they cannot be the source of disorder or irregularity, as some few weak people affirm, and who are incapable of enjoying the sweets and blessings they offer, and are willing to bestow on all those, who have gratitude sufficient to return the favour.—I doubt not, but what I have here advanced, will be allowed to be true and very reasonable, and that, if the Pagans had

34. THE DEIFICATION OF

had no other intent in the choice of their deities, than the profit or pleasure that the object they worship'd could procure them, it is incontestibly evident that their choice ought naturally to have fallen upon these beneficent objects, and that deification was their due; altars ought to have been erected, and festivals instituted to their honour. If these parts had been deified, the world would have reaped great advantages from it, namely, the extinction of polytheism.

It is certain that the greater part of men would have received these deities with pleasure, and would not have spared libations to their honour, and I believe the offices of *Ædile* and *Augur* would have been solicited with great warmth.

had

It

It would have been a very easy matter to have persuaded those people to have but one principal divinity ; and in time the subalterns would have lost their credit. There is nothing in nature would more voluntarily have been idolized, because, besides a certain natural inclination which induces men to love them, there is a thousand good and solid reasons, which, proving their utility and noble design, furnish arguments in favour of their being deified.

Cicero says in his treatise *De Natura Deorum*, that the gods of Epicurus did neither good nor harm ; that they were in heaven with their arms a-cross, without concerning themselves about any thing that happen'd on the earth. The de-
ities

36 THE DEIFICATION OF

ities I recommend are of a different kind, they are seldom in a state of inaction, and few days pass without their doing some good.

In imitation of Jupiter, they do not hurl their thunder but upon the fool hardy, and do no harm but when they have been first offended. They are obliging, and always disposed to return much more than we give them; their bosom is open to our desires, and a most exquisite pleasure accompanies their services.

The Fair Sex are frequently accused of running into an excess of self-love, and seem in my opinion very justifiable. Several Women have carried the social virtues to the highest pitch; in this they are more to be admired than the men,

as

as their education seldom offers them any thing great or sublime.*

Their natural modesty, without doubt, is the reason they have not, like the men, adopted a deity in the taste of Priapus; and I believe I may affirm, that if they had adopted one equivalent to him in all their ceremonies †, they would have

* Montaigne exclaims very much against the manner of educating the fair-sex. These are his words, We dress them up from their infancy for the procurement of love; their grace, their dress, their knowledge, their conversation, nay all their instruction terminates in this point. Their governesses instil nothing else into them but the looks of love, and by their continual repetitions, frequently put them out of conceit with it. Montaigne Vol. 3. page 80. Quart. Edit. Paris 1725.

† What gives ground for such a conjecture, is what we read of the bacchanals; the women, it seems, out of policy, carried the

have given the preference to that god, who was driven from Lampſacus for poſſeſſing talents which are not expoſed to chaſtiſement and correction in the age we live in.

But let us conſider if there can be no reaſon aſſigned for the ſtrange conduct that men have ſhewn on that account to the fair-ſex: I find there are ſeveral; the principal of which is jealouſy; a paſſion which naturally deprives us of all ideas of juſtice and gratitude. Man, who, I know not for what reaſon, has always aſſumed a power and authority over women, has invented a thou-
ſand

the figure of the natural parts of a man ſometimes on their necks, and ſometimes on their head; and when they were widows, they concealed them under their head-dreſs. Men have never had the good manners, to return the women the favour in their diverſions and feſtivals.

fand means to justify himself. His being the
 stronger vessel was none of the worst I pre-
 sume; and he knew as well to make use of it.
 His pride prejudiced him in his own opinion, and
 hinder'd him from entering into a discussion of the
 the right and title she had of pretending to a dei-
 fication of her parts.—What! said man, shall
 woman be subject to me, and I be fool enough to
 make a deity of a thing which takes a pride in de-
 basing us from the very instant it raises us up?
 shall I address my prayer and vows to one which
 either grants us nothing, or demands (when it
 hears our prayers) an acknowledgment out of
 our power to give? shall I offer sacrifices, and
 make libations in honour of a deity, who will
 not vouchsafe so much as to move sometimes,
 (if I may use such an expression) nor witness
 by any mark that my oblations have been agree-
 able?

able? Shall I come to the door of their temple, with my heart full of ardent wishes, and be obliged, on that account, to observe a law which may enforce me to keep fast to their honour, as it were, to the meanest of stars?—Now and then, Juno, under the name of Lucina, would hinder me from entering the sanctuary: And a thousand other reasons will always dissuade me from offering any kind of worship to them. Besides, without deifying them, they have usurped a power, which already is too great, and which, in process of time, will become unlimited. But would it not be much better not to justify one's-self, than defend a cause with such paltry reasons. Wood and stone, had they not a more absolute dependance upon the will of man, and was it not more reasonable

able to entertain a religious veneration for inanimate beings, and such as are made with hands, and of which he could hope nor fear any thing. No one will dispute that the pagans would have acted more consistently, if instead of admitting an infinite number of deities, they had supposed one only author, creator and preserver of the universe. Common sense points out this idea, and as soon as a man can understand that two and two make four, he may also prove that the world is the work of one sole creator, without which we can have no ideas of harmony and order.

But should we admit of Polytheism and make a division of power and properties, and when all the productions of nature become the objects of religious awe, I say every kind of argument

D

which

42 THE DEIFICATION OF

which excludes the parts of the fair sex, is the most uncouth and unsupportable. For their gods of the first rank, which they make such a noise about, have they not bent the knee a hundred times before the alters of the fair-sex?

Has not Jupiter assumed all kinds of shapes in order to introduce himself into the sanctuary of pleasure? and has he not been always pleased with a change of Paradise? Nature, which speaks to the most simple as well as to the most elevated geniuses, explains herself very early to all upon the article of distinction of sexes, and is it not acting directly contrary to her dictates, not to look upon the parts as the most venerable and amiable in the human frame? It appears

pears that Zeno was of opinion that the parts ought to be particularly repeated, as says Diogenes Laerties.*

This philosopher was afraid of contracting too great a familiarity with them in being too often in their company, and for this reason he knew his wife only once during his whole life; and if the conjecture may have place here, I am apt to think that Homer had the same sentiments, which is easy to prove if we admit the opinion of La Mothe le Vayer, who supposes this Poet's beautiful description of the Grotto of the Nymphs to be an allegory of the parts of woman: It is in the third book of the

* Diog. Laert. Vit. Zenon. Lib. 7. -Segm. 13.

44 THE DEIFICATION OF

Odyſſey; and to oblige my reader, I have tranſlated into Latin the eleven Greek verſes, which contain this deſcription.

*Sat ramis diffuſa in portus vertice Oliva,
Quam propter jucundum antrum obſcurumque recedit,
Sacra domus Nymphis, quæ Naiades indigitantur,
Intus crateres, patulæque ex marmore vivo
Amphoræ, apes dulci quâ ponunt mella fuſurro,
Saxea ſunt intus quoque ſtamina longa, ubi Nymphæ
Purpureas texunt telas, miſerabile viſu.
Intus purpurei latices, ſed janua duplex :
Hæc Boream ſpectans homines admittit ; at illa
Reſpiciens antrum divinior, invia prorſus
Eſt homini, præbetque viam immortalibus unis.*

La Mothe le Vayer pretends that beſides the literal and hiſtorical ſenſe of the Iliad and Odyſſey,

sey, these poems contain a mystic and moral sense, and he will have it that the passage in question must be mystically understood as I have observed before: for the original gives us a very natural picture of the fair-sex.

All the world knows in what esteem the cave of the Sybils was held, and no doubt it was for this reason that Homer made choice of this allegory, so ingeniously adapted to the parts of the sex; and if the supposition may have place here, one may boldly affirm that the poet intended to insinuate an admiration and respect for them — But it is quite needless to have recourse to Hypothesis. For whether Homer and Zeno looked upon these parts with respect or contempt is a matter of indifference, and will prove nothing;

46 THE DEIFICATION OF

but the example and opinion of all mankind in this point serve as a basis to my system.

Of all the passions none is more violent than that of love, and it is necessary to be so, since it is productive of more good than any other.

Nature with reluctance waits for the age of love to make us feel its stings. Love exercises its empire among the savage Indians as well as in the most civilized countries.

All men in general are inclined to give to the fair-sex, and to that part which distinguishes them from ours, more affecting marks of veneration, than either fear or policy can dictate.

There are few men who do not love the sex and that few is composed of fellows without souls

soul, without mind, which is the characteristic of a lover of the fair-sex. It is well known that the sex of woman-haters which sprung up at different times never subsisted long.

The reign of the Abelians* was very short, Origin† made few profelytes, and

D 4

Com-

* The Abelians were a sect which established itself about Hipponia, which was extinct in St. Austin's time. These hereticks took a wife for a companion with no other view than to be comforted and assisted in their domestic affairs, making a vow to lay with her without knowing her, but they adopted other men's children.

† Origin from an excess of devotion castrated himself and became an eunuch for the kingdom of God's sake. There
are

48 THE DEIFICATION OF.

Combabus † had few imitators of his fidelity to his master.

What we love and set our hearts on naturally attracts our respect. It would not have been wondered at, if mankind had paid more honours to these parts than they have as yet. But jealousy as I hinted above is the source of confusion.

are few divines, I believe, now-a-days, who would take the passage of scripture relative to this subject in a literal sense.

† Combabus, a young nobleman of the court of Syria, being appointed to attend the Queen Stratonice on a long journey, that he might not be tempted or suspected of interfering with the king's property, cut off and locked up in a sealed box, the certificate of his continence, and delivered it into the king's hands.

These

These parts enjoy many privileges which our nature will not admit of. Ours is but the very humble servant of theirs, and if both one and the other were deified, and it should come to a dispute about rank and priority, I would advise our sex to give it quite up, and wait for the last event; for when we come to close quarters our efforts are violent it is true, but we soon give way, and never return to the charge, till after mature deliberation.

This superiority has always been the subject of envy and disputes. Man is not generous enough to acknowledge that nature has refused him equal power and privileges; though he is secretly convinced of his own weakness, yet he will not make use of such a plea as he fairly might so as to give up his pretensions.

But

50 THE DEIFICATION OF

But if this reason alone was not sufficient to determine him, the qualities and design of these parts would leave him no room to hesitate. *They* are the immediate source of all the wonders we see in the world, and on their productions depends the perfection or imperfection of all visible objects. From them sprung the prince who was the scourge of his fellow-creatures, as well as he who was born to bless the world with days of peace and happiness. It is in these organs of generation that the seeds of vice and virtue are formed. *They* are the instruments designed to beautify or deform the world.

Do there exist in nature any objects capable of producing the like effects? No, none; and what ought more particularly to have engaged the
the

the pagans to deify these parts, is, that they contain as many incomprehensible mysteries as their other deities ; for the most ingenious anatomist, or most subtil philosopher, could never yet account for their secret operation.

Neither atoms, nor the material subtilties, attraction or graviation, will ever contribute to the discovery of their mechanism ; for surely the ancients were more ignorant on this article, than we of the present age ; every thing of a mysterious nature attracted their attention and devotion, but by an unparalleled neglect, that which all the world looked upon as at the most unfathomable, had not so much as one image set up to its honour. It does not appear that the figure made of wax and honey, which they carried in procession at the feast of the Thesmophorites

52 THE DEIFICATION OF

phorites, was that of the genitals of the fair sex ; and even were this proved, it would not have much weight, because it was the women themselves that provided this image, and made use of it in commemoration of an adventure which drew the first attention of the goddess Ceree,* annexing to it any idea of devotion.—

Pity it is that the learned Thurneby never dreamt of the subject I am treating ; if he had, he would (by this way of reasoning) have found convincing proofs of the divinity of these parts ; for he asserts that the pagan deities always carried about them an agreeable odour, and to

* Bayle's dictionary. Art. Thesmophories.

his assertion, he quotes Ovid and virgil. The former speaking of Horas, says,

*Omnia finierat : successit in Horas,
Minsit odor : posses seire fuisse Deum.*

And Virgil speaking of Venus,

*Dixit, & avertens rosea cervice refulsit,
Ambrosiæque comæ divinum vertice odorem
Spiravere :——*

And Ælian in his history of animals, says that Juno bathing herself in a fountain on her wedding day, communicated the most fragrant odour not only to the water in which she bathed, but likewise to all the adjacent places.——

But perhaps these Pagans might say as many dull wits say now-a-days, that these parts were
really

54 THE DEIFICATION OF

really Pandora's box, and that this fable must be understood as an allegory of the characteristic nature of women.

This may be true, and allowing it to be so, it favours my opinion very much ; for since the parts of the sex are capable of producing so much good or evil, and since the Pagans in their choice of objects regard only the good or evil they were productive of, and the mystery of their nature, it is evident that the fair-sex has a right to complain of, and exclaim against the injustice done them.

These parts have in other respects a real advantage over all other objects which men have deified, an advantage very agreeable to men, and which ought to have excited their gratitude.

The

The sun and the earth honoured more than one with religious worship, besides their utility are objects beautiful to the sight.

The Sun in all his different aspects on our horizon is very agreeable, and enlivens all nature with his beams. His rise is brilliant, his meridian majestic, and his setting serene.

The earth presents to our eyes at one season fruits, at another flowers. These objects indeed besides their utility please the eye ; but is there a man living who has the use of all his faculties that will not readily agree, that the earth and sun in all their glory, do not excite a pleasure comparable to that arising from these useful and amiable parts.

The

36 THE DEIFICATION OF

The pleasure they excite in us is all exstasy and a sort of heavenly enthusiasm; the emotions they raise surpass the tremblings of the Delphick oracle.

This in fact is the only perfect pleasure, because it employs at the same time all the parts of the body and the faculties of the soul; surely then

The homage we pay to these parts can never render us suspected of acting the hypocrite.

Besides, these deities never change their likings and averfions; they love the man constantly, bestow their favours with a free heart, and never refuse but against their inclination.

The

The gods which the heathen world adored most, were seldom constant in their affections, and man was never assured that his oblations were welcome. Here, on the contrary, there falls not a drop of incense upon the altar which is not graciously received, and politely acknowledged.

What a wide difference then would men have found, if their blindness and ingratitude had not made them deviate from the path of right reason! what pains might have been spared and fears avoided! two divinities might have sufficed for all; Jupiter in heaven, and the parts of the sex on earth. By this means all jealousy would cease, every dispute and controversy would vanish, and the Pagan theology be

E

com-

58 THE DEIFICATION, &c.

compleat: to which I must add, the advantage mankind would receive by excluding all the other useless divinities. The Pagans were obliged to observe a certain attitude when they prayed, a custom which subsists to this day among the Indians. The deities I plead for, more wise and intelligent, never stand upon such trifles, nor care for the posture of the body, provided the respect paid them is attended with zeal and fervour, an upright intention, and a steady perseverance;—which fairly proves that these parts deserve, for their utility and noble design, our homage and adoration; and for the complaisance with which they discharge their duty, all our love and gratitude.

F I N I S.



